

## **SUMMARY OF THE MEMBERSHIP AND OUTREACH COMMITTEE MEETING DECEMBER 16, 1999**

The Membership and Outreach Committee of the National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Conference (NELAC) met Thursday, December 16, 1999, at 8 a.m. Eastern Standard Time (EST) as part of the Fifth NELAC Interim Meeting in Washington, D.C. Because the chair, Dr. Irene E. Ronning, of the Oregon Public Health Laboratory was unable to attend, the meeting was led by Mr. Mike Ciolek of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA). A list of action items is given in Attachment A. A list of participants is given in Attachment B. *The purpose of the meeting was to review issues related to the NELAC Website and open discussion to items that the committee needs to address.*

### **INTRODUCTION OF COMMITTEE MEMBERS, AGENDA REVIEW**

Mr. Ciolek reviewed the ground rules for the meeting participants, the members introduced themselves and gave their affiliations, and then Mr. Ciolek briefly discussed the proposed agenda. Ms. Marge Prevost agreed to present the meeting results at the closing session as Mr. Ciolek would not be available.

### **AGENDA ITEMS**

#### **Charge of Committee and Approval of Minutes from the Last Two Meetings**

The charge of the committee is to initiate membership invitations, publicize NELAC to prospective participants, coordinate and resolve participant concerns, establish credentialing criteria and resolve credentialing conflicts of Voting Members. This committee solicits and develops informational materials to promote understanding and appreciation of the importance of the NELAC objectives. This committee also promotes a spirit of cooperation and timely dialogue between NELAC and other organizations and federal agencies.

The committee reviewed and approved the minutes from the September 28, 1999 and November 1, 1999 meetings by teleconference with a clarification that Ms. Jeanne Mourrain of the USEPA is the consulting USEPA counsel regarding NELAC accreditation of Canadian laboratories.

#### **Old Business Reports**

##### **NELAC/National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Program (NELAP) and North American Foreign Trade Agreement (NAFTA)**

Presently New York (and possibly other states) accredit Canadian Laboratories. Canadian and Mexican labs may seek NELAC accreditation due to NAFTA and their proximity to the United States. These countries can obtain accreditation, because it is based on state authority and not on federal law. The committee previously referred questions regarding possible prescription of NAFTA or NELAC to USEPA Counsel's Office and is awaiting response.

## NELAC Website: Listserver

A listserver would provide an easier and economic way of distributing information. It could provide an automated e-mail update system, discussion groups, and handle mass e-mailings. Although this appears to be a good idea there is not enough funding is available to implement it at this time. This item was tabled until a later date when it may be more feasible. One option mentioned was the possibility of providing instructions on how to set up “bookmarks” and “favorites” to get e-mails sent notifying the user. This is however, software specific and may be difficult to implement.

## **NELAC Webpage - Recent Changes**

- Proficiency Tester (PT) Provider section - List of National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) PT providers has been added
- Links have been added to Laboratory Accreditation Issues - Seven Links to accrediting authorities websites
- Related Links
  - Quality Systems Manual
  - Accreditation of Source Testing
  - Drinking Water
- The committee asked for potential nonprofit organizational links - following are some suggestions
  - American Association for Laboratory Accreditation (A2LA)
  - Center for Disease Control and Prevention/Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendments (CDC/CLIA) Webpage
  - Food and Drug Administration (FDA)
  - International Standards Organization (ISO)
  - Office of Ground Water and Drinking Water (OGWDW) 12/1/99 Drinking Water Ruling
  - USEPA's Rules and Regulations site
  - State governments' webpages
- Updates on Introduction and History Sections - presented by Rhonda Carter
  - Laboratories need to get their applications in as soon as possible for 2000 accreditation process
  - Once Oregon is approved the number of Accrediting Authorities needs to be revised
- The Open Forum has been eliminated from the NELAC Website due to lack of use.
- Revised Fact Sheets - Presented by Don Zahniser
  - NELAC reference was made consistent for all Fact Sheets
  - Changes from past to present tense
  - Links to Ms. Mourrain's office were added
  - Need to make wording changes in both the NELAC and NELAP references to reflect the correct relationship between the two
- Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)
  - Presently there are two FAQ sheets

- The committee is waiting for liaisons to be appointed from each committee. A reminder will be given at the closing session - this liaison will provide the committee's FAQs to this committee
- The Fact Sheets include most of the Membership and Outreach Committee's FAQs
- FAQs are in the background section of the NELAC Website - a meeting participant pointed out that this was not intuitive
- A meeting participant recommended passing a sheet of paper at each committee's meetings in the future so participants can write down their questions which would help the committee in developing FAQs
- Presentation Materials
  - The Membership and Outreach Committee did not develop the presentation materials
  - The committee has made these materials generic with removal of page numbers, and logos so they can be mixed and matched to suit individual needs
  - Need to be improved and will be made available on the NELAC Website at a later time
  - The committee put the slide presentations in the parking lot until the next meeting so that they would have time to review them before editing

### **NELAC Webpage-Future Projects**

Mr. Ciolek requested that the participants to provide any ideas they may have to improve the NELAC Website. Listed below are the suggestions:

- Provide links to other relevant associations (i.e., American Waste Management Association)
- Short documents should be put in HTML format for quicker downloading
- "What's New?" section should not be chronological order but presented in a way that is more intuitive
  - Old and multiple drafts of documents should be moved to the archives
- A link to the national database would be helpful in the future. Presently the database is under development

### **Other Membership and Outreach Projects**

Upon receipt of the "NELAC Needs You" forms, Dr. Ronning contacts the committee chairs about potential committee members. Ms. Rhonda Carter volunteered to help Dr. Ronning with this.

### **Unresolved Issues**

Issues that still need to be resolved include:

- outreach vehicles to potential accrediting authorities:
  - How do you reach these people?
  - What is the best method(s)?
- Bylaws, Article II, Section 2 - may need to be deleted because it is not applicable.

**Attachment A**

### **ACTION ITEMS**

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<b>Item No.</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Date to be Completed</b>
1.	Obtain a designated liaison from each standing committee.	
2.	Contact PT Providers to send fact sheets with ITS.	
3.	Establish links with related associations.	

**PARTICIPANTS  
MEMBERSHIP AND OUTREACH COMMITTEE MEETING  
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